

**SHINING TIME STATION**

**"EL SCHEMO"**

BY

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FIRST DRAFT  
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SCENE 1  
(MAINSET)

(DAYTIME. SOME DISGRUNTLED PASSENGERS MILL AROUND NEAR THE PLATFORM, WAITING TO GO. AT MAIN DESK, STACY PICKS UP A DESK MICROPHONE, INTONES FORMALLY.)

STACY:

May I ...  
(taps broken mike)  
May I have your attention  
...

(SHE TAPS IT AGAIN, THEN GIVES UP.  
SHE WALKS OUT TO GROUP.)

STACY (CONT'D):

Everybody? I'm sorry,  
but the trains still  
aren't coming through.

(PASSENGERS REACT, EXASPERATED.)

PASSENGER 1:

What's the problem?  
Don't tell me those great  
big choo-choo trains  
can't run in a little  
cold weather.

STACY:

The trains are fine. But  
this frost took us all by  
surprise. The switches  
along the tracks are  
frozen stiff.

PASSENGER 2:

So what do we do? Wait a  
week until the weather  
warms up?

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

STACY:

People up and down the  
line are working on the  
problem. When the  
switches are shifting  
properly, we'll be up and  
running again.  
Meanwhile, thank you for  
your patience.

(SHE SMILES, RETURNS TO DESK.  
PASSENGERS REACT, GO TO BENCHES,  
OPEN NEWSPAPERS, ETC., AS ON  
PLATFORM ENTRANCE --)

(SCHEMER APPEARS, LADEN WITH OLD  
SCARVES, GLOVES, ETC...)

SCHEMER:

Did somebody say "cold"?  
Did somebody say bitter-  
wintry-freezing-frigid  
bite-your-toesies-off  
cold?

(HE HUSTLES DOWN TO PASSENGERS.)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

See Schemer. And get  
ready for his quality  
line of first-rate  
quality cold weather  
merchandise.

(unfurls ratty scarf)  
TA-DAAAA!

(HE SEES ITS HOLES, ETC., AND  
QUICKLY GETS RID OF IT.)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

Not ta-daa that. That's  
one of my test models.  
Ta-daa...this!

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

(HE PULLS OUT ANOTHER, UNFURLS IT  
-- MORE HOLES. HE THROWS IT OVER  
HIS SHOULDER AND RUMMAGES THROUGH  
HIS STOCK AS --)

(OFF PLATFORM, DAN ENTERS, RUBBING  
HANDS, CROSSES TO STACY AT DESK.)

DAN:

Wow, Aunt Stacy, what's  
that cool gun Billy's  
shooting at the tracks?

STACY:

A blow torch, Dan. He's  
trying to thaw out the  
switches.. As long as  
they're frozen, the  
trains can't use the  
sidings, or reverse  
directions -- they can't  
even get out of each  
other's way.

DAN:

He should use the blow  
torch on the platform,  
too. It's all icy.

STACY:

We'll use salt for that.  
Maybe we should use the  
passengers. They're all  
getting hot under the  
collar.

(AT PLATFORM, GINNY APPEARS,  
EXULTANT. SHE SPOTS SCHEMER, STILL  
WORKING THE CROWD. SHE CROSSES TO  
HIM.)

SCHEMER:

But look at this. One  
hundred percent wool, not  
counting the non-wool  
components --

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

GINNY:

There he is. Schemer,  
you prognosticating  
genius, you.

(SHE GIVES HIM A HUG AND KISSES HIM  
ON THE CHEEK. HE'S STUNNED.)

SCHEMER:

Uh, Ginny ...

GINNY:

I just love this man.  
And so do my tomatoes.

(STACY AND DAN SEE THIS, GO OVER TO  
WATCH, UNDER --)

SCHEMER:

Ladies and gentlemen,  
Ginny of Farmer's Dell.  
Another satisfied  
customer of Schemer  
Winter Wear.

GINNY:

Winter wear my foot,  
Schemer. I want to thank  
you for saving my  
beefsteak crop with that  
miracle gizmo of yours.

SCHEMER:

Huh? I mean, which  
miracle gizmo are you  
referring to.

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

GINNY:

(POINTS TO ARCADE.)

That fortune telling machine. I stopped by yesterday on the way back to Dell, popped in a nickel to kill some time, and got the lowdown skinny from the Great Beyond.

(SHE PRODUCES A SMALL SLIP OF PAPER, HOLDS IT OUT. STACY TAKES, READS ALOUD AS PASSENGERS GATHER AND LISTEN IN.)

STACY:

"A sudden change in the weather. Take steps to avert disaster."

GINNY:

Which I did. Not that I'm superstitious. But I looked at those tomatoes, hangin' on the vines out there, and I figured, what the hey. So I covered 'em with burlap, fired up the smoke pots, and boom.

SCHEMER:

Boom? I mean, how "boom"?

GINNY:

Boom comes this frost! Tomatoes all over the Valley are freezing up and hangin' there like Christmas tree bulbs. But my little beauties are nice and soft. When the weather turns back, they'll come in red and ready.

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Ginny, let me see if I  
have this straight.  
You're saying my machine  
predicted the future?

GINNY:

That's the deal from my  
end.

(PASSENGERS BURST INTO EXCITED  
CHATTER WHILE SCHEMER REACTS.)

DAN:

Can a machine really tell  
the future?

STACY:

Of course not. It was a  
coincidence

SCHEMER:

Coincidence? Tell that  
to Ginny's tomatoes!

STACY:

Oh, come on, Schemer.  
The machine happened to  
say the weather would  
change, and in this case,  
it did. It was luck.

SCHEMER:

Miss Jones, I think I  
speak for myself, and  
Ginny, and these  
wonderful people here,  
when I tell you that I  
am deeply offended. I  
bring into Shining Time  
Station a Machine that  
can predict the future,  
and you sneer. You sneer  
and jeer. Shame on you.

(PASSENGERS NOD.)

SCENE 1 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

And hurray for me!

(PASSENGERS CHEER.)

Ladies and gentlemen, the  
machine awaits. Who  
wants to try?

(PASSENGERS YELL AND WAVE AS  
SCHEMER AND GINNY LEAD THEM TO  
ARCADE, WHERE THEY LINE UP AT  
MACHINE AS STACY SHRUGS AT DAN.)

DAN:

Shouldn't we try to stop  
them?

STACY:

People have a right to  
believe silly things.  
What makes me nervous is,  
if they start believing  
Schemer's machine, they  
may start believing  
Schemer.

DAN:

That's impossible!  
Nobody really believes  
Schemer. (beat) Do they?

(STACY MERELY GESTURES "VOILA!"  
CUT TO ARCADE, WHERE PASSENGERS  
ARE ANXIOUS TO USE MACHINE, AND  
SCHEMER IS SLAPPING BACKS, SHAKING  
HANDS, ETC ... )

SCENE 2  
(INT. JUKE BOX)

(TITO'S VAULT. TITO IS ON LADDER,  
LOOKING INTO PIGGY BANK EXCITEDLY.  
ELEVATOR LOWERS INTO VIEW AND DIDI  
STEPS OUT.)

DIDI:

Hey, Tito --

TITO:

I know! The trains  
can't run, so the  
passengers are hanging  
out in the station. And  
that means they're  
putting money in the  
juke box, right?

DIDI:

Wrong.

TITO:

We gotta get upstairs to  
play, right?

DIDI:

Wrong.

TITO:

They probably got ten  
different songs they want  
to hear, right?

DIDI:

Wrong ten times! They're  
not putting money in the  
juke box. They're  
putting money into  
Schemer's fortune  
telling machine.

TITO:

What? that piece of  
junk!

SCENE 2 (CONT'D)

DIDI:

Schemer told them it can  
really tell the future.

TITO:

But that's wrong!

DIDI:

Right.

(ELEVATOR DOOR CLOSES; ELEVATOR  
GOES UP AS TITO MOANS AND SHAKES  
HIS HEAD.)

SCENE 3  
(INT. ARCADE)

(DAN WORRIEDLY WATCHES AS THE PASSENGERS PUT MONEY IN THE FORTUNE TELLER AND RECEIVE THEIR FORTUNES AS SCHEMER SMILES.)

PASSENGER 1:  
(reading fortune)

"Good news from a trusted advisor. Be prepared to act on it."

SCHEMER:

Uh, yes, the trusted advisor is ... the machine! So to get some good news, get back in line and put in another nickel!

(PASSENGER 1 NODS, GETS BACK IN LINE.)

PASSENGER 2:  
(reading)

"Financial windfall from long-cultivated source. Keep lines of communication open." What on earth does that mean?

SCENE 3 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:  
(takes fortune)

No problem... "Financial windfall means, uh, money will, will fall out of the sky... "Cultivated source" means, uh, your garden, stuff like that. "Keep lines of communication open..." Okay, what this means is, when you get home, go out to your garden, stand under the telephone wires, and money will fall from the sky and hit you on the head.

PASSENGER 2:

Hey, that sounds great!  
Thanks!

SCHEMER:

Don't mention it.  
(to himself)  
It could happen.

(DAN REACTS TO THIS, BUT IS  
DISTRACTED BY --)

(AT BILLY'S WORKSHOP, MR. CONDUCTOR  
APPEARS.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Psst! Dan!

(HE MOTIONS FOR DAN TO JOIN HIM.  
DAN CROSSES TO --)

(INTERIOR OF BILLY'S WORKSHOP -- DAN  
JOINS MR. CONDUCTOR AND KARA, WHO  
IS TAKING OFF HER COAT, GLOVES,  
HAT, ETC.)

SCENE 3 (CONT'D)

KARA:

It is freezing! I was helping Billy but I had to come in. My nose is turning to ice.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

I've been helping out up and down the line too.. When somebody isn't looking, and reaches for a tool, and its a little closer then he thinks it is? That's me. I push it over, it's the least I can do, considering ...

DAN:

Considering what, Mr. Conductor?

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Considering that I know the person who's responsible for this cold. I asked him not to do it, but he never listens.

KARA:

Who?

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Jack Frost. You know. The winter guy.

DAN:

Well, thanks to him, everybody thinks Schemer can see the future. Or his machine can, anyway. Ginny got a fortune that said, look out for bad weather, and now it came true.

SCENE 3 (CONT'D)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Oh, that was a coincidence. Jack has this planned a long time ago. You know, it's funny. He loves to confuse people with cold weather, but personally he's really a very warm individual ...

(KARA IS AT DOOR, LOOKING OUT AT STATION.)

KARA:

Right now he could be Schemer's best friend.

(ANGLE ON WORKSHOP DOOR - KARA, DAN AND MR. CONDUCTOR PEEK OUT AT ARCADE WHERE SCHEMER CONSULTS WITH A CUSTOMER RE: HIS FORTUNE.)

SCHEMER:

"An investment in the arts brings ample benefits..." Yeah, that means, um -- of course! Talk about obvious. It means, put all your money into music--  
(points)  
-- there! In the juke box!

(CUSTOMER NODS, HEADS FOR JUKE BOX AS DAN, KARA AND MR. CONDUCTOR TRADE A LOOK.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Things may be getting out of hand. I'd better have a little chat with Jack Frost before Schemer takes over the world.

(HE DISAPPEARS)

SCENE 4  
(INT. JUKE BOX)

(MAIN PERFORMANCE AREA -- THE  
PUPPETS ARE READY TO GO. DIDI IS  
MIFFED.)

TITO:

Here they come, children!  
Beaucoup nickels and  
how!

DIDI:

That Schemer! He  
wouldn't know the truth  
if it slapped him in the  
face.

REX:

Maybe. But some people  
will believe anything,  
tight, Tex?

TEX:

As long as it's what they  
want to hear, Rex.

DIDI:

That doesn't make it  
right.

GRACE:

Can we discuss this  
later, y'all? Right now  
we have a job to do.  
Namely, (song title).

SCENE 5

PUPPET SONG.

(INTERCUT: INTERIOR ARCADE --  
SCURRIES TO REAR OF FORTUNE  
MACHINE, WITHDRAWS LITTLE POT OF  
NICKELS AND GLEEFULLY LAUGHS AS HE  
DUMPS THEM IN HIS POCKET.)

SCENE 6  
(MAIN SET)

(OFF PLATFORM, MIDGE SMOOT HUSTLES IN AND RUNS TO MAIN DESK, WHERE STACY IS TRYING TO DO PAPERWORK DESPITE THE UPROAR AT THE ARCADE.)

MIDGE:

Where is he, Stacy?

STACY KEEPS HER EYES ON HER PAPERWORK, BUT SILENTLY POINTS TO ARCADE. MIDGE, HOWEVER, IS SO BESIDE HERSELF SHE DOESN'T SEE.)

MIDGE (CONT'D):

I have just heard the most fantastic, amazing, incredible rumor -- so of course I believed it immediately. Because some things are so unbelievable, you just have to believe them. Now where is the amazing Schemer?

(SHE LOOKS AT STACY, WHO CONTINUES TO POINT BUT DOES NOT LOOK UP. MIDGE DOESN'T SEE THE POINTING HAND, AND RAPS THE DESK IMPATIENTLY.)

MIDGE (CONT'D):

Hello? Madame Station Manager? Is anybody home?

(STACY JABS HER FINGER TOWARD THE ARCADE. MIDGE FINALLY SEES IT, TURNS, AND FOLLOWS UNTIL SHE SEES CROWD AT ARCADE.)

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

MIDGE (CONT'D):

He must be in that crowd.  
Thanks.

(beat, indignant)  
And you don't have to  
point so loud. I can  
hear you.

(beat, reverie)  
Just think. Schemer can  
predict the future. And  
I thought he was barely  
able to predict his own  
name.

STACY:

Nobody can predict the  
future, Midge. His  
fortune telling machine  
got lucky, and now  
everybody thinks he has  
special powers.

(ANGLE ON PLATFORM. SCHEMER,  
DRESSED IN TURBAN AND ROBE,  
APPEARS. HE SETS UP A LITTLE  
PORTABLE TAPE MACHINE NEARBY, HAS  
BASKET OF FORTUNE COOKIES IN OTHER  
HAND.)

SCHEMER:

And now ... the man with  
special powers. The man  
who Sees All. The man  
who can tell fortunes the  
way other men tell  
jokes ... let's have a  
warm round of Shining  
Times Station applause  
for the great ... El  
Schemo.

(HE TURNS ON THE TAPE PLAYER AND  
CHEESY "MYSTERIOUS" MUSIC STARTS.  
HE SWEEPS OVER THE ARCADE WITH THE  
COOKIES. MIDGE SWOONS, FOLLOWS.)

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

MIDGE:

Schemer --

SCHEMER:

Ah-ah! Midge Smoot! You  
weren't listening. You  
may address me as ...  
(salaams)  
... El Schemo.

MIDGE:

El Schemo? Well, it  
sounds like a city in  
California, but have it  
your way. Just tell me:  
are you on the level?

SCHEMER:

On the level? My dear  
quaint small-town  
busybody, El Schemo is on  
a level above that of  
mere mortals. Am I not  
He who Sees and Knows?

MIDGE:

He who seizes the nose?

SCHEMER:

He who sneezes through  
the nose. But seriously  
--

(draws her close)  
For years I have  
dedicated my life to the  
pure pursuit of one  
ideal. And that is --

MIDGE:

Wisdom?

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

-- money. But all that  
is over now. I have  
found my true calling, my  
mission, my sacred  
cause. I look into the  
future. And I tell  
fortunes ... for the  
unfortunate. How do I do  
it?

(STACY HAS EDGED OVER AND NOW  
TAKES SOME COOKIES FROM THE BASKET.  
JUST BEFORE SHE OPENS ONE, SHE  
SPEAKS SARCASTICALLY.)

STACY:

I can't imagine.

SCHEMER:

I join in the cosmic  
dance of the universe.  
The dancing cosmic energy  
of time particles and  
space particles and  
cosmic dance particles.

STACY:

And after you dance  
with the particles, you  
write down the future in  
these cookies?

SCHEMER:

What's it to ya?

STACY:  
(reading)

"You will spend your  
money in Schemer's  
Arcade." "You must spend  
your nickels in the  
Arcade." "Spend, spend,  
spend like mad in  
Schemer's Arcade."

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

The future speaks!

MIDGE:

Talk to me, future, talk  
to me!

(HE TAKES MIDGE'S ELBOW TO STEER  
HER AWAY.)

SCHEMER:

Come Midge Smoot. I  
sense a negative  
vibration in the  
neighborhood.

(STACY STOMPS DOWN ON HIS ROBE,  
STOPPING IN HIS TRACKS.)

STACY:

Schemer, this is the most  
outrageous stunt you have  
ever pulled. These  
people trust you, and you  
are cheating them out of  
their money.

SCHEMER:

Who dares to mouth off to  
El Schemo?

STACY:

The passengers in this  
station are my  
responsibility. I'm  
going to tell them the  
truth.

(SCHEMER LEADS HER OFF TO THE SIDE.  
HE WHISPERS URGENTLY.)

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Are you crazy, Miss Jones? This is the scam of my life! People are giving me money just because I tell them to! I should have thought of this ten years ago!

STACY:

You're betraying their trust in you.

SCHEMER:

I'm cashing in on their silliness!

STACY:

A lie is a lie. I'm going to tell them you're a fraud.

(THE PASSENGERS ARE GETTING RESTLESS, AND START CHANTING.)

PASSENGERS:

Sche-mo!            Sche-mo!  
(etc...)

(SCHEMER SALAAMS TOWARD THEM, BUT STACY CALLS OUT.)

STACY:

This is all a fake! He can't predict the future! Don't waste your money!

PASSENGER 1:

How do you know?

PASSENGER 2:

What about the tomatoes?

(SCHEMER TURNS, GLOATING, TO STACY.)

SCHEMER:

There's no law against  
telling a bunch of  
suckers what they want to  
hear.

(TURNS TO CROWD.)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

El Schemo ... will speak!

(THE PASSENGERS CHEER.)

STACY:

I think they're just  
bored. Once the trains  
start running again, all  
your so-called followers  
will disappear.

SCHEMER:

That's right. And  
they'll tell their  
friends. And each new  
train will bring a fresh  
load of customers!

(HE WAVES TO CROWD AS HE RETURNS TO  
ARCADE. STACY FOLLOWS, SCOWLING,  
AND SHUTS OFF TAPE MACHINE.)

(ANGLE ON ARCADE, SCHEMER HAS SET  
UP A PSEUDO-ORNATE THRONE, WHICH HE  
MOVES TO IN GREAT POMP. HE SITS AS  
CROWD GATHERS AROUND. HE SIGNALS  
FOR SILENCE, SHUTS HIS EYES, AND  
INTONES.)

SCHEMER:

El Schemo is receiving  
emanations from the  
future. The trains --

(MOCK HORROR)

Oh no! Say it isn't so,  
future!

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

PASSENGERS:

What? What is it?  
(etc...)

SCHEMER:

All the trains will  
derail! All passengers  
should take the bus!

(THE CROWD STARTS TO MOVE AS ONE  
TOWARD THE PLATFORM.)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

But first -- Hey, hold  
it!

(CROWD STOPS, LOOKS BACK.)

But first, you should  
give all your train fare  
to -- El Schemo!

(THE CROWD OBEDIENTLY RETURNS TO  
HIM. HE GESTURES TOWARD VASE AT  
HIS FEET, INTO WHICH CROWD STARTS  
DUMPING ITS MONEY. HE LOOKS OVER  
AT THIN-LIPPED STACY, AND SMIRKS.)

(AT FORTUNE MACHINE, MIDGE GETS A  
FORTUNE, READS, FROWNS.)

MIDGE:

"Your home is your  
domain. Nature will  
submit to your design."  
Is that so...?

(ANGEL ON SCHEMER -- HE GIGGLES AT  
ALL THE MONEY AS MIDGE ARRIVES.)

MIDGE:

Look here, Schemerino, or  
whatever your name is.

(HANDS HIM FORTUNE.)

Does this mean what I  
think it means?

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:  
(reads, cautious)

Maybe.

MIDGE:

I've got a stand of  
poison ivy out back  
that's been driving me  
crazy. What this tells  
me is, I should go tear  
that stuff apart with my  
bare hands and show it  
who's boss! Now is that  
right?

SCHEMER:  
(beat, smiles)

Why not?

STACY:

Midge! Don't!

MIDGE:

Hot dog! 'Scuse me,  
Stacy.

(SHE LEAVES ON THE RUN. AT THE  
PLATFORM, SHE PASSES GINNY, WHO IS  
LEADING THE MAYOR IN.)

MAYOR:

Ginny, I'm not sure about  
this. Sometimes I think  
Man wasn't meant to know  
the future and neither  
was I.

GINNY:

You owe it to the town,  
Mayor Flopdinger.

(SHE LEADS HIM INTO THE CROWD,  
MOVING PEOPLE ASIDE.)

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

GINNY (CONT'D):

Excuse us ... got the  
Mayor coming through here  
... Gang way for His  
Honor ...

(THEY REACH SCHEMER WHO BEAMS  
COCKILY.)

SCHEMER:

Well well, Mister Mayor,  
what can I do for you?

MAYOR:

Don't you know already?

(TO GINNY)

I thought he can see the  
future. I don't like  
this.

(HE STARTS TO LEAVE.)

SCHEMER:

I knew you were going to  
say that!

MAYOR:

(STOPS)

You did?

SCHEMER:

Yeah. Sort of.

GINNY:

The Mayor has an  
important question.

(TO MAYOR)

Go on.

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

MAYOR:

Oh very well. Mr.  
Schemer --

SCHEMER:

El Schemo's here for you,  
sir.

MAYOR:

Eskimos? Here? Is it  
that cold? Well I can't  
see them now.

SCHEMER:

Uhm Your Honor, El Schemo  
is me.

MAYOR:

Really, I had no idea.  
Anyway. How can I get  
the Town Council to vote  
to put a pay phone next  
to the fountain in the  
park where I eat my  
lunch? So far they  
refuse to do it.

STACY:

But the fountain is very  
nice. Putting a phone  
next to it would look  
kind of odd.

MAYOR:

Because, Miss Jones, when  
I examine my sandwich  
every day, I often have  
to call my wife and ask  
her what exactly is in  
it. When I eat in the  
park, I have to walk  
all the way over to  
Bangfusser's Hardware to  
find a phone. Well, Mr.  
Eskimo?

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:  
(concentrates hard)

Just a moment ... it's coming to me -- Ah yes. Mr. Mayor, you tell the Council that if they don't vote to permit that phone, they can't come to your birthday party.

MAYOR:  
(shocked)

Oh, dear. That's rather extreme. Well it work?

SCHEMER:

It works with me. I predict it will work like a charm.

GINNY:

And he knows, Your Honor. Remember how he saved my tomatoes.

MAYOR:

Yes, so he did. Well, I don't like having to play hardball like that, but ... yes, I'll take it under advisement. Thank you.

(HE AND GINNY START TO LEAVE.)

GINNY:

One more thing, El Schemer. Should I buy that used truck I've been looking at?

SCHEMER:

Definitely.

SCENE 6 (CONT'D)

STACY:

Wait a minute. Who's supposed to be able to see the future? Schemer, or the fortune teller?

SCHEMER:

Miss Jones, at this point, the answer is both. Man and machine have become one.

STACY:  
(to others)

You mustn't listen to him!  
This is all a big fraud!

GINNY:

Many thanks, El. See you all later.

(GINNY AND THE MAYOR LEAVE AS STACY WATCHES HELPLESSLY. SHE GLARES AT SCHEMER, THEN COLLECTS HERSELF AND WORDLESSLY CROSSES TO BILLY'S WORKSHOP. SCHEMER CHUCKLES AS THE CROWD AGAIN GATHERS AROUND HIM.)

SCENE 7  
(INT WORKSHOP)

(A BIT LATER, STACY, DAN AND KARA  
ARE IN CONFERENCE. ALL LOOK GLUM.)

KARA:

I think Schemer is  
starting to really  
believe all this.

STACY:

What's going to happen  
when somebody takes his  
advice about something  
important?

(ALL THREE SIGH AT ONCE.)

(MR. CONDUCTOR APPEARS, FREEZING.  
HE STOMPS AROUND TO WARM UP AS THE  
OTHERS GIVE LACKLUSTER GREETING.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Boy, you three look as  
low as the temperature.

DAN:

Schemer's still at it,  
Mr. Conductor.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

I know. And Jack Frost  
thinks it's hilarious!  
He says watching all  
these people falling for  
Schemer's story is even  
more fun than watching  
cars skid on ice.

STACY:

If only the trains would  
start running again.  
Then everyone would leave  
and this whole thing  
would fade away.

SCENE 7 (CONT'D)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

They've got train  
problems on the Isle of  
Sodor, too. But I  
suppose no one wants to  
hear about that...

(BEAT. DAN AND KARA LOOK AT HIM.)

DAN:

Of course we do!

(HE NODS, BLOWS WHISTLE ...)

SCENE 8

(THOMAS EPISODE #8 -- "JAMES AND  
THE COACHES")

SCENE 9  
(INT. WORKSHOP)

(STACY, DAN, KARA, AND MR.  
CONDUCTOR)

STACY:

I'm afraid we're going to  
need more than boot laces  
to solve out problem.

DAN:

We need to be inventive.

KARA:

Just like the driver was  
with James.

STACY:

And we'd better act fast.  
El Schemo is getting more  
popular every minute.  
Listen.

(IN ARCADE, SCHEMER IS LEADING THE  
CROWD IN A RESPONSIVE CHANT.)

SCHEMER:

EL SCHEMO!

CROWD:

EL SCHEMO!

SCHEMER:

HE'S A DREAM-O!

CROWD:

HE'S A DREAM-O!

SCHEMER/CROWD:

GIVE SHINING/  
TIME STATION/  
TO HIM!

(RESUME - WORKSHOP)

SCENE 9 (CONT'D)

KARA:

He's a dream-o? Yuck.

DAN:

They think he's magical.

(beat)

But you really are  
magical, Mr. Conductor.

STACY:

Dan's right. Will you  
help up get El Schemo off  
the team-o?

MR. CONDUCTOR:

I have an idea. But it's  
kind of risky. If it  
backfires, things could  
be worse than ever.  
Still, let me see what I  
can do.

(HE DISAPPEARS, UNDER -- )

CROWD/SCHEMER (OS):

Give Shining/  
Time Station/  
To him!

SCENE 10

(INT. JUKE BOX - DRESSING ROOM)

(THE PUPPETS ARE SEATED, HANGING OUT, DISGRUNTLED.)

DIDI:

This is just great. The station is full of people, but nobody's using the juke box.

GRACE:

Schemer's got them giving money directly to him. He doesn't even need our music.

REX:

I miss playing, Tex.

TEX:

You and me both, Rex.

(TITO SUDDENLY SHRIEKS. DIDI TURNS TO HIM.)

DIDI:

What's your problem?

TITO:

What if he stays El Schemo forever, and turns this juke box into one big piggy bank.

(BEAT. ALL SUDDENLY SHRIEK.)

SCENE 11  
(ARCADE)

(A BIT LATER. SCHEMER IS LOUNGING ON THE THRONE, SIPPING A BIG FROTHY OVERDONE DRINK AND CALLING OUT TO THE LINE OF CUSTOMERS AT THE FORTUNE TELLING MACHINE.)

SCHEMER:

Hey, single file there.

PASSENGER 3:

How come the machine  
isn't talking?

SCHEMER:

It writes notes. It  
doesn't talk.

(SUDDENLY GINNY, MIDGE, AND THE  
MAYOR ARRIVE, STEAMING. MIDGE IS  
COVERED WITH PINK CALAMINE  
LOTION.)

MIDGE:

Schemer --

GINNY:

El Schemerino --

MAYOR:

Mister Eskimo --

MIDGE:

You have some explaining  
to do. I took your  
advice, and pulled up all  
that poison ivy. But it  
didn't submit to my  
design. It made me  
break out all over!

SCENE 11 (CONT'D)

GINNY:

I bought that used truck  
you told me to, and the  
thing conked out two  
miles from the lot. It  
needs a new transmission,  
mister!

MAYOR:

And I ... against my  
better judgment ... I  
did what you said. I  
told the town council  
that unless they gave me  
my pay phone in the park,  
they couldn't come to my  
birthday party. And do  
you know what happened?

SCHEMER:

I predict you're going to  
tell me.

MAYOR:  
(impressed)

Why yes! I am. How did  
--

(snaps out of it)  
They were so offended,  
they told me I couldn't  
come to their birthday  
parties, and then they  
passed a law saying I had  
to eat lunch in my  
office!

(ALL THREE START BABBLING AT ONCE  
AS STACY, KARA AND DAN ARRIVE.)

SCENE 11 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Uh, maybe you didn't do  
it right --

(grandly)

El Schemo will explain!

(as himself;panicky)

Don't blame me. This  
isn't the future. THE  
future isn't here yet.

(grandly)

Ordinary people!  
Silence!

(all grow quiet)

I will consult with the  
Beyond. All of you --  
put more money into the  
machine!

GINNY:

This one's on you,  
Schemer.

(HE REACTS, DIGS OUT A NICKEL, GOES  
TO MACHINE AS OTHERS CROWD AROUND.)

(INSERT: IN MACHINE, WE SEE MR.  
CONDUCTOR, IN COSTUME, REPLACE THE  
MANNEQUIN FACE.)

(RESUME - SCHEMER ADDRESSES THE  
CROWD.)

SCHEMER:

El Schemo reminds you  
that the machine will  
issue a note which I will  
interpret. The machine  
itself, of course --

(PUTS NICKEL IN)

-- does not speak.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

What do you want, El  
Schemo?

SCENE 11 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:  
(terrified, bleats)

HAH? Uh, um, it talks!  
Tell me of the future, O  
talking machine!

MR. CONDUCTOR:

You cannot see the  
future. Nor can I. The  
future is unknowable.

(THE CROWD REACTS.)

SCHEMER:

Um--ha ha! What a joker!  
El Schemo admires your  
sense of humor--

MR. CONDUCTOR:

You misled these people  
for your own private  
gain. You told them  
fibs, to get their money.  
Shame!

SCHEMER:

Well, I--you know, I made  
a few guesses about some  
things--

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Your explanations of my  
messages are all wrong.  
Your predictions are all  
wrong. You are a fraud.

SCHEMER:

Oh yeah? What about  
Ginny's tomatoes?

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Are you kidding? That  
was a coincidence!

(THE PASSENGERS, MAYOR, GINNY,  
MIDGE REACT.)

SCENE 11 (CONT'D)

PASSENGER 1:

That's the last time I  
ever spend one cent in  
your Arcade. You fake.

SCHEMER:

An evil spirit has taken  
over the machine! El  
Schemo predicts --

PASSENGER 2:

You lied to us.

(ALL START LEAVING THE ARCADE AS  
THE GLARE AT SCHEMER.)

SCHEMER:

Who are you going to  
believe? Some stupid  
talking machine? or El  
Schemo himself?

(ANGLE ON MAIN AREA -- STACY, DAN  
AND KARA WATCH.)

DAN:

I almost feel sorry for  
him.

KARA:

Almost.

SFX: TRAIN WHISTLE.

(STACY'S EYES LIGHT UP. SHE DASHES  
ONTO THE PLATFORM.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Schemer...?

SCHEMER:

Can't you be quiet for  
two minutes?

SCENE 11 (CONT'D)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Are you ready to  
apologize to everyone?

SCHEMER:

Apologize? El Schemo?  
Ha ha ha!

(ALL FALL SILENT, LOOK AT SCHEMER,  
THEN TURN THEIR BACKS ON HIM AND  
WALK AWAY. SCHEMER TRIES TO LURE  
THEM BACK.)

SCHEMER (CONT'D):

But perhaps El Schemo  
will apologize. If he is  
asked nicely.

(THE CROWD CONTINUES TO IGNORE HIM  
-- AS STACY RUNS IN FROM THE  
PLATFORM.)

STACY:

The trains are running!  
All aboard!

(ALL JOSTLE PAST SCHEMER AND HEAD  
OUT TO THE TRAINS.)

MIDGE:

I never want to talk to  
than man again.

GINNY:

I can't believe I fell  
for his line of hooley.

MAYOR:  
(to Schemer)

And I don't think you  
really are an Eskimo.

(THEY LEAVE.)

SCENE 11 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Okay! I apologize! Just  
don't hate me! I'm  
sorry! Really! (etc..)

(HE PLEADS AS ALL FILE OUT EXCEPT  
STACY AND THE KIDS. FINALLY  
SILENCE.)

SCHEMER:

Everybody thinks I'm no  
good.

STACY:

I wonder why? Could it  
be because you lied,  
cheated, and stole  
people's money?

SCHEMER:

I guess so. But it's no  
fun when everybody hates  
you.

STACY:

Then have you learned  
your lesson about fooling  
people?

SCHEMER:

(contrite)

Yes, Miss Jones...

(a glint)

But it was fun while it  
lasted.

(to deadpan kids)

I mean, can you believe  
those dupes? Thinking  
machines can talk and  
tell the future?

DAN:

But the machine did talk.

SCENE 11 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

Dan, my lad, that was  
some wise guy passenger  
hiding in the back.  
Okay, so he called  
my bluff. But those  
chumps really believed  
it!

KARA:

So the machine really  
can't talk?

SCHEMER:

Kara, you too? Boy, it's  
really true, isn't it. A  
sucker is born every  
minute. Meet two of 'em.

(ANGLE ON ARCADE - MR. CONDUCTOR  
APPEARS, STANDING ON MACHINE.)

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Sche-merrr....

(SCHEMER FREEZES, PETRIFIED.)

SCHEMER:

I don't hear that.

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Sche-merr! It is I! The  
spirit of the machine! I  
think I'll haunt you for  
the rest of your life!

SCHEMER:

No! Leave me alone!

MR. CONDUCTOR:

Don't you want me to tell  
you the future?

SCENE 11 (CONT'D)

SCHEMER:

No! I'm out of the  
future business!  
AHHHHH--!

(HE TURNS AND FLEES WILDLY TOWARD  
THE PLATFORM, TANGLING HIMSELF IN  
HIS ROBE AND TURBAN UNTIL HE  
MANAGES TO DRAG HIMSELF OUT OF  
SIGHT, AS THE OTHERS LAUGH.)

FADE TO BLACK